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SUBJECT: NORWAY SKEPTICAL ABOUT INDIA NUCLEAR DEAL

REF: STATE 34761

Classified By: P/E Counselor Mike Hammer, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On March 7 we delivered reftel points to Roald Naess, Ambassador and Chair of the Nuclear Suppliers Group Consultative Group (NSG) and Hilda Janne Skorpen, Assistant Director General at the MFA. Naess said that in his capacity as NSG chair he had "no particular views" on the points. However, in a national capacity he noted that the Norwegian MFA questioned reftel's explanation of the benefits of the civil nuclear cooperation deal with India. While not prejudging what Norway's response will be at March 22 NSG Consultative Group, Naess was particularly concerned about "vertical proliferation," meaning that providing fuel facilitation plants to India could have military development implications. Additionally, Naess said he was looking for clarification as to India's implementation of measures raised in the July, 2005 agreement. Naess recently met with the Indian Ambassador who was unable to provide Naess any information about Indian engagement with the IAEA concerning safeguard issues.

¶2. (C) Naess discussed the motivations shaping the foreign relations of other nations with India. For example, he noted that the renewed Russian interest in India is motivated by largely "commercial interests" as compared to "strategic interests" which motivate the U.S. He also questioned China's reaction to the reftel points, noting China's close economic cooperation with India's rival Pakistan. Naess also suggested that several NSG countries might want to make sure that the U.S.-India deal had gone through all domestic U.S. and Indian ratification procedures before taking the issue up within the NSG.

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